Lord Vamanadeva

The Dwarf Incarnation of Supreme Lord

&

Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple

At Kanchipuram

Vamana avatar, an extraordinary astonishing incarnation of Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared as the son of Kasyapa Muni and Aditi to regain the universe for His devotees- the demigods from the great King Bali who had ruled over the entire universe.

He appeared as Lord Vamana, a *brahmana* dwarf and tricked Bali Maharaja by asking for three steps of land. When Bali agreed to offer Lord three steps of land, the Supreme Lord acting in terms of the material energy expanded His body and covered the whole earth 🌎 with one step. With His second step He covered everything in the universe was within His body, including the earth, the planetary systems, the sky, the directions, the various holes in the universe, the seas, the oceans, the birds, beasts, human beings, the demigods and the great saintly persons. And finally, when there was no place left for Him to take His third step, Lord Vamanadeva asked Bali where should He place His third step that Bali had promised to offer to Him. Bali was fixed to satisfy Lord Vamana to fulfil his promise. He remembered the great determination of his grandfather Prahlada in devotional service. Bali Maharaja, with great humility then requested Lord Vamanadeva to place His third step on his head. Lord Vamanadeva then placed His third lotus foot step on

Bali's head, who thus surrendered everything to the Lord. By mercy of Lord Vamana, Bali could see that the Lord is all-pervading and that everything rests in His body.

Lord Vamana was extremely pleased with the great determination of Bali of him *being fixed in devotional service* despite losing all his possessions.

◆ He gave Bali the Sutala planet whose opulence is far greater than of Indra's.

◆ Lord Vamana also agreed to become the doorman of Sutala planet, and because this planet is especially protected by Lord, it is free from mental and bodily miseries, fatigue, dizziness, defeat and all other disturbances.

◆ Lord Vamana, in this way also satisfied the desire of Aditi, the mother of demigods in regaining there kingdom.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 8 chapters 15 to 22 describe this astonishing pastime.

Bali was the grandson of Prahlada (for whom Lord Nrsimhadeva had appeared and protected from great demon Hiranyakasipu). Although born in demonic family, he was a great devotee of Supreme Lord Krishna. Bali had performed a special *Visvajit-yajna* and received a celestial chariot with yellow horses, bow, arrows and celestial armour. He also received a garland from his grandfather Prahlada Maharaja, with flowers that would never fade and a conchshell from Sukracharya.

Bali Maharaja Performs the Visvajit Ceremony to Conquer Indra

As Bali Maharaja performed the fire sacrifice known as Visvajit, he received from the fire a celestial chariot with yellow horses, bow and arrows and celestial armour. He then received a garland from his grandfather

Prahlada Maharaja, with flowers that would never fade and a conchshell from Sukracharya. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.15.5-6)

King Bali attacks Indrapuri ~ Equipped with all paraphernalia, Bali went ahead to attack Indrapuri. King Indra was struck with wonder upon seeing Bali at the head of his vast army of soldiers, who looked as if they would swallow the sky and burn all directions.

Indra approached his spiritual master, Brhaspati and told him about Bali's strength and inquired about his duty. Brhaspati told that the *brahmana* descendants of Bhrgu Muni, being pleased by Bali Maharaja endowed him with such extraordinary power. Because Bali had been endowed with such power, the demigods should not fight with him. *Their only hope was to gain the favour of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indeed, there was no alternative.*

Bali Maharaja Attacks King Indra

Bali Maharaja had received a great supply of paraphernalia for war, by pleasing the *brahmana* descendants of Bhrigu Muni. As he rode into Indrapuri with his demon army, they looked as though they would swallow the sky and burn all directions with their vision. *(Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.15.7-11)*

Under the circumstances, Brhaspati advised them to leave the heavenly planets and keep themselves somewhere invisible. The demigods, being thus advised by Brhaspati for their benefit, immediately accepted his words. They left Indrapuri and scattered, without being observed by the demons. Bali Maharaja entered the heavenly kingdom, and from there he brought the three worlds under his control.

The *brahmana* descendants of Bhrgu, being very pleased with Bali Maharaja who had conquered the entire universe, now engaged him in performing one hundred *asvamedha* sacrifices. When Bali Maharaja performed these sacrifices, he gained a great reputation in all directions. Because of the favour of the *brahmanas*, the great soul Bali Maharaja became very opulent and prosperous. Thus he shone in his position, like the brilliant moon in the sky.

Meanwhile, Aditi, the mother of demigods, because of separation from them, was very much aggrieved. After a long time when her husband, great sage Kasyapa emerged from a trance of meditation and returned to his *asrama* , he saw his *asrama* was no longer beautiful and that his wife was very morose.

Aditi requested him to tell her how her sons could return and reoccupy their positions. At first, Kasyapa instructed her in the philosophy of self-realization, the difference between matter and spirit, and how to be unaffected by material loss.

But when he saw that Aditi was not satisfied even after these instructions, he advised her to worship Lord Krishna and *assured her that only He could satisfy her and fulfil all her desires.* He asked Aditi to engage in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the master of everything, who can subdue everyone's enemies, and who sits within everyone's heart. Only that Supreme Person — Krishna, or Vasudeva — can bestow all auspicious benedictions upon everyone, for He is the spiritual master of the universe. When Aditi expressed her desire to worship Lord Krishna, Kasyapa instructed her about very special process known as *Payo-vrata*, which is executed in 12 days.

Aditi Worships the Supreme Lord

Aditi was lamenting the dangerous position of her demigod sons, and she inquired from her husband what she could do. Kasyapa instructed her on the regulations for worshiping Lord Vasudeva and told her that only He could satisfy her desires. She followed strictly, performing the payo-vrata ceremony, and the Supreme Lord appeared before her. She was immediately overwhelmed with bliss and offered Him prayers with folded hands. (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 8.17.1-5)

Aditi Worships the Supreme Lord ~ Aditi strictly followed the instructions for the *Payo vrata* ceremony. With full, undiverted attention, Aditi thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and in this way brought under full control her mind and senses, which resembled forceful horses. She concentrated her mind upon the Supreme Lord, Vasudeva. The Supreme Lord was very pleased with Aditi and appeared before her dressed in yellow garments and bearing a conchshell, disc, club and lotus in His four hands. As soon as Aditi saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead present before her, she was overwhelmed by transcendental bliss that she at once stood up and then fell to the ground like a rod to offer the Lord her respectful obeisances.

Aditi's throat was choked because of ecstatic feelings, and her entire body trembled with devotion. Although she wanted to offer suitable prayers to the Lord, she could not do anything, and thus she remained silent for some time. Then, feeling solace, observing the beauty of the Lord, she offered her prayers. She appeared as though drinking through her eyes the Supreme Lord, who is the husband of the goddess of fortune, the enjoyer of all sacrificial ceremonies, and the master and Lord of the entire universe.

Aditi said: *"O master and enjoyer of all sacrificial ceremonies, O infallible and most famous person, whose name, when chanted, spreads all good fortune! O original Supreme Personality of Godhead, supreme controller, shelter of all holy places, You are the shelter of all poor, suffering living entities, and You have appeared to diminish their suffering. Please be kind to us and spread our good fortune."*

The lotus-eyed Lord relied, "I have already understood your long-cherished desires for the welfare of your sons, who have been deprived of all opulences and driven from their residence by their enemies. *In My opinion, almost all the chiefs of the demons are now unconquerable, for they are being protected by brahmanas, whom the Supreme Lord always favours. Thus the use of power against them now will not at all be a source of happiness.* Yet because I have been satisfied by the activities of your vow, I must find some means to favour you, for worship of Me never goes in vain but certainly gives the desired result according to what one deserves. You have prayed to Me and properly worshiped Me by performing the great *payo-vrata* ceremony for the sake of protecting your sons. Because of Kasyapa Muni's austerities, I shall agree to become your son and thus protect your other sons."

The Supreme Lord, the Supersoul of all living entities, was very pleased with Aditi, and He agreed to become her son by incarnating as a plenary expansion. After giving His word of honor, the Lord disappeared from that spot. Aditi, having received the extremely valuable benediction that the Lord would appear as her son, considered herself very successful, and continued to worship Lord Vasudeva with great devotion. Being situated in a meditational trance, Kasyapa Muni, whose vision is never mistaken, could see that a plenary portion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead had entered within him.

Lord Brahma, who is known as Hiranyagarbha, understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead had entered Aditi's womb, he began to offer prayers to the Lord by reciting transcendental names.

Lord Vamanadeva - The Dwarf Incarnation of Supreme Lord

The Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared from the womb of Aditi in his four-armed form of Narayana. His mother and father, Aditi and Kasyapa Muni, were struck with wonder and joy. Then, standing before them, the Lord assumed the form of Vamana, the dwarf *brahmana*. (*Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.18.11-12*)

Appearance of Lord Vamana ~ After Brahma glorified the Supreme Lord's activities and prowess, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is transcendental to material realm, appeared as Lord Vamanadeva from the womb of Aditi. His four hands were decorated with a conchshell, club, lotus and disc, He was dressed in yellow garments, and His eyes appeared like the petals of a blooming lotus.

His bodily hue was blackish. His lotus face, decorated with earrings resembling sharks, appeared very beautiful, and on His bosom was the mark of Srivatsa. He wore bangles on His wrists, armlets on His arms, a helmet on His head, a belt on His waist, a sacred thread across His chest, and ankle bells decorating His lotus feet. An uncommonly beautiful garland of flowers decorated His bosom, and because the flowers were extremely fragrant, a large group of bees, making their natural humming sounds, invaded them for honey. When the Lord appeared, wearing the Kaustubha gem on His neck, His effulgence vanquished the darkness in the home of the Prajapati Kasyapa.

At that time, there was happiness in all directions, in the reservoirs of water like the rivers and oceans, and in the core of everyone's heart. The various seasons displayed their respective qualities, and all living entities in the upper planetary system, in outer space and on the surface of the earth were jubilant. The demigods, the cows, the brahmanas and the hills and mountains were all filled with joy. Therefore, this auspicious day is called Vijaya.

When the Supreme Lord, who has a *sac-cid-ananda* body, appeared as the son of Kasyapa and Aditi, both of His parents were very astonished. The Lord appeared in His original form, with ornaments and weapons in His hands. Although this ever-existing form is not visible in the material world, He nonetheless appeared in this form. Then, in the presence of His father and mother, He assumed the form of Vamana, a *brahmana-dwarf*, a *brahmacari*, just like a theatrical actor.

All the great sages expressed their jubilation, and with Kasyapa Muni before them they performed the birthday ceremony of Lord Vamana. At the time of Lord Vamanadeva's sacred thread ceremony, He was honored by the sun-god, Brhaspati, the goddess presiding over the planet earth, the deity of the heavenly planets, His mother, Lord Brahma, Kuvera, the seven *rsis* and others.

Lord Vamanadeva visits Bali Maharaja's sacrificial arena

Lord Vamanadeva then visited the sacrificial arena on the northern side of the Narmada River, at the field known as Bhrgukaccha, where *brahmanas* of the Bhrgu dynasty were performing *yajnas*. Wearing a belt made of *munja* straw, an upper garment of deerskin and a sacred thread and carrying in His hands a *danda*, an umbrella and a waterpot (*kamandulu*), Lord Vamanadeva appeared in the sacrificial arena of Maharaja Bali.

Because of His transcendentally effulgent presence, all the priests were diminished in their prowess, and thus they all stood from their seats and offered prayers to Lord Vamanadeva. Even Lord Siva accepts on his head the Ganges water generated from the toe of Lord Vamanadeva. Therefore, after washing the Lord's feet, Bali Maharaja immediately accepted the water from the Lord's feet on his head and felt that he and his predecessors had certainly been glorified. Then Bali Maharaja inquired of Lord Vamanadeva's welfare and requested the Lord to ask him for money, jewels or anything He might desire.

☆ **Lord Vamana begs Three paces of Land in Charity from Bali** ~ When Lord Vamanadeva, heard Bali Maharaja speaking in this pleasing way, He was very satisfied, for Bali Maharaja had spoken in terms of religious principles. Thus the Lord began to praise him that his dynasty is even more glorious due to the presence of Prahlada Maharaja, who is like the beautiful moon in the sky.

Bali then said to Lord Vamana to ask anything He desired. Lord Vamana said, "I ask only three paces of land, to the measurement of My steps."

Bali was greatly astonished and said, "I am able to give You an entire island because I am the proprietor of the three divisions of the universe. You are asking only 3 paces of land. Therefore, You are not very intelligent."

Lord Vamana said, *"If I were not satisfied with three paces of land, then surely I would not be satisfied even with possessing one of the seven islands, as I would hope to get others. One should be satisfied with whatever he achieves by his previous destiny, for discontent can never bring happiness. Material existence causes discontent in regard to fulfilling one's lusty desires and achieving more and more money. This is the cause for the continuation of material life, which is full of repeated birth and death. But one who is satisfied by that which is obtained by destiny is fit for liberation from this material existence. A person who is not self-controlled will not be happy even with possessing the three worlds. Therefore, I ask only three paces of land. By such a gift I shall be very pleased, for the way of happiness is to be fully satisfied to receive that which is absolutely needed." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.19.21-27)*

Bali smiled and told, "All right. Take whatever You like."

Sukracharya Curses Bali Maharaja to Lose All His Fortune

Sukracharya, the spiritual master of Bali understood that Vamanadeva is none other than Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, and He has come in disguise to take away all possessions from Bali. Sukracarya immediately warned Bali forbidding him to withdraw his promise.

Bali Maharaja, however, was a devotee, and he saw the arguments of his guru as a hindrance to his devotional service. Contemplating on Sukracarya's advise, Bali Maharaja said, *"I am the grandson of Maharaja Prahlada. How can I withdraw my promise because of greed for money when I have already said that I shall give this land? There is nothing more sinful than untruthfulness. Because of this, mother earth once said, 'I can bear any heavy thing except a person who is a liar.' I do not fear hell, poverty, an ocean of distress, fall down from my position or even death itself as much as I fear cheating a brahmana."*

Hearing this, Sukracharya cursed him, saying "Because of disobeying me, you shall very soon be bereft of all your opulence."

Lord Vamanadeva Expands His Footstep to the Edge of the Universe

Lord Vamanadeva expands His footstep to envelope whole Universe ~ Bali Maharaja's wife, Vindhyavali, immediately came forward with a large golden waterpot full to worship the Lord by washing His feet. Bali jubilantly washed the Lord's lotus feet and then took the water on his head, for that water delivers the entire universe. The residents of the higher planetary system, namely the demigods, all being very pleased by Bali Maharaja's simple, non-duplicitous act, praised his qualities and showered upon him millions of flowers. They sounded thousands and thousands of kettledrums and trumpets again and again, and they sang in great jubilation, declaring, "How exalted a person is Bali, and what a difficult task he has performed! Even though he knew that Supreme Lord was on the side of his enemies, he nonetheless gave the Lord the entire three worlds in charity."

The unlimited Supreme Lord, who had assumed the form of Vamana, then began increasing in size, acting in terms of the material energy, until everything in the universe was within His body, including the earth, the planetary systems, the sky, the directions, the various holes in the universe, the seas, the oceans, the birds, beasts, human beings, the demigods and the great saintly persons.

◆ With His first step Lord covered the entire surface of the world and by extending His body He covered the entire sky. With His hands He covered all directions;
◆ With His second step He covered the entire upper planetary system;
◆ Therefore there was no vacant place left for Him to take His third footstep.

By mercy of Lord Vamana, Bali could see that the Lord is all-pervading and that everything rests in His body. He saw that Lord's body contained everything within the universe, including all the gross material elements, the senses, the sense objects, the mind, intelligence and false ego, the various kinds of living entities, and the actions and reactions of the three modes of material nature.

The Lord Envelopes the Universe

Bali surrenders his life ~ Desiring to advertise the glories of Bali Maharaja, Lord Vamana arrested him for not fulfilling his promise in regard to the Lord's third step.

Bali Maharaja surrenders his life to Lord Vamanadeva

When Bali was deprived of all his possessions, Garuda, understanding the desire of Lord Vamana, arrested Bali with the ropes of Varuna. When Bali was reduced to helpless position, Lord Vamana asked him for the third step of land. Bali was fixed to satisfy Lord Vamana to fulfil his promise. He remembered the great determination of his grandfather Prahlada in devotional service. He did not hesitate and offered his head for the Lord's third lotus footstep.

Bali Maharaja Lowers His Head in Shame in Front of Lord Vamana

Understanding Supreme Lord's purpose, Garuda, immediately arrested Bali Mahaṛaja with the ropes of Varuna. When Bali was thus reduced to a helpless position, Lord asked him for the third step of land. Bali Maharaja was fixed in his determination to satisfy Vamanadeva. He offered his head for the Lord's third lotus footstep. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.21.26-22.2)

While Bali Mahārāja, having been arrested by the ropes of Varuṇa, was offering prayers to the Lord, his grandfather Prahlada Maharaja appeared there and described how the Supreme Personality of Godhead had delivered Bali Maharajaa by taking his possessions in a tricky way. While Prahlāda Maharaja was present, Lord Brahmā and Bali's wife, Vindhyavali, described the supremacy of the Supreme Lord.

Bali Maharaja said, "What is the use of the material body, which automatically leaves its owner at the end of life? And what is the use of all one's family members, who are actually plunderers taking away money that is useful for the service of the Lord in spiritual opulence? Only by providence have I been forcibly brought under Your lotus feet and deprived of all my opulence. Because of the illusion created by temporary opulence, people in general, who live under material conditions, facing accidental death at every moment, do not understand that this life is temporary. Only by providence have I been saved from that condition."

Bali's wife Vindhyavali said, "O my Lord, You have created the entire universe for the enjoyment of Your personal pastimes, but foolish, unintelligent men have claimed proprietorship for material enjoyment. Certainly they are shameless agnostics. Falsely claiming proprietorship, they think they can give charity and enjoy. In such a condition, what good can they do for You, who are the independent creator, maintainer and annihilator of this universe"

Lord Vamana said, "Because of material opulence a foolish person becomes dull-witted and mad. Thus he has no respect for anyone within the three worlds and defies even My authority. To such a person I show special favour by first taking away all his possessions. While rotating in the cycle of birth and death again and again in different species because of his own fruitive activities, the dependent living entity, by good fortune, may happen to become a human being. This human birth is very rarely obtained."

Lord Vamana was extremely pleased with the great determination of Bali of him being fixed in devotional service despite losing all his possessions.

◆ He gave Bali the Sutala planet whose opulence is far greater than of Indra's.

◆ Lord Vamana also agreed to become the doorman of Sutala planet, and because this planet is especially protected by Lord, it is free from mental and bodily miseries, fatigue, dizziness, defeat and all other disturbances.

◆ Lord Vamana, in this way also satisfied the desire of Aditi, the mother of demigods in regaining their kingdom.

Lord Vamanadeva Places His Third Step on Bali's Head

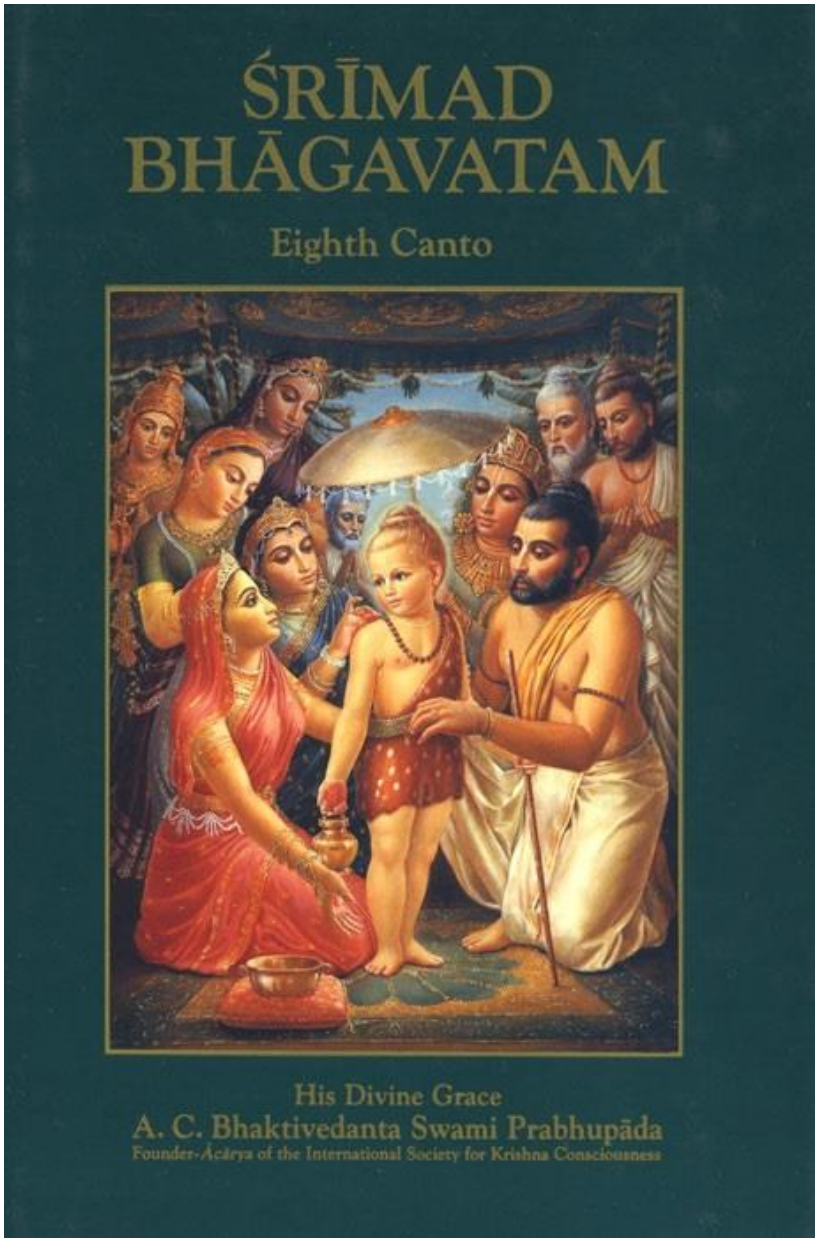
Vamanadeva said, "O King of the demons, you have promised to give Me three steps of land, but I have occupied the entire universe with two steps. Now think about where I should put My third." Bali Maharaja, fixed in his determination, would not allow his promise to be false. He asked the Lord to please place His third lotus footstep on his head. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.21.29)

The great soul Bali Maharaja experienced that the highest gain in life is to attain devotional service under the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet in full surrender. Being fixed in this conclusion, his heart full of ecstatic devotion and his eyes full of tears, he offered obeisances to the Personality of Godhead and then, with his associates, entered the planet known as Sutala.

Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead satisfied the desire of Aditi and reinstalled Lord Indra. Prahlada Maharaja then described the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in this material world. Prahlāda Mahārāja praised the Supreme Lord for creating the material world, for being equal to everyone and for being extremely liberal to the devotees, just like a desire tree. Indeed, Prahlada Maharaja said that the Lord is kind not only to His devotees but also to the demons.

The Lord then ordered Sukracarya to describe Bali Maharaja's faults and discrepancies in executing the sacrificial ceremony. Sukracarya said: "My Lord, You are the enjoyer and lawgiver in all performances of sacrifice, and You are the *yajna-purusa*, the person to whom all sacrifices are offered. If one has fully satisfied You, where is the chance of discrepancies or faults in his performances of sacrifice?"

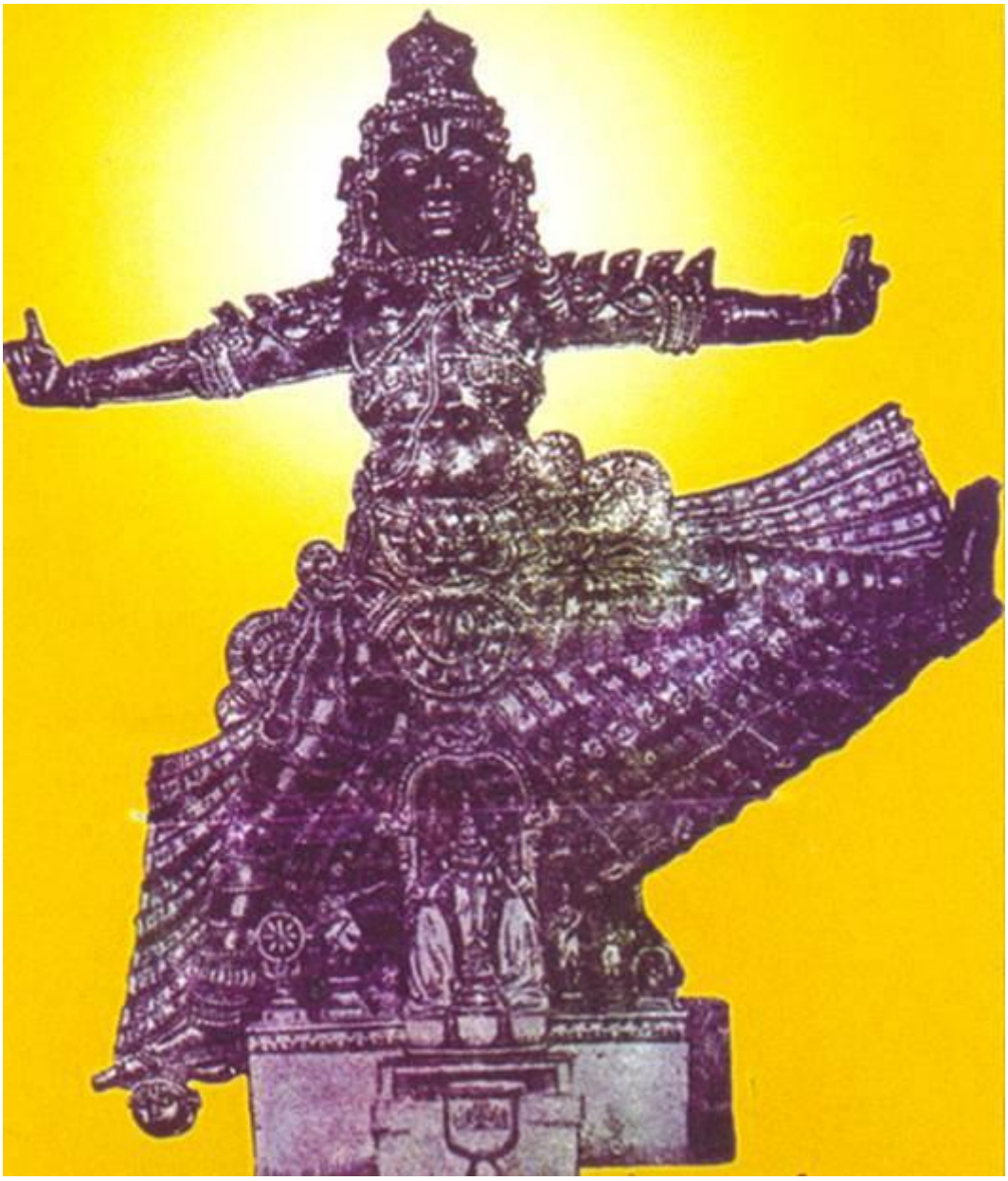
Having seen the wonderful activities of Lord Krishna in the sacrificial arena of Bali Maharaja, all the demigods and saintly persons glorified the Lord again and again. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* concludes this amazing pastime of Bali Maharaja and Vamanadeva by saying that the most auspicious function of the conditioned soul is to chant and hear about the glorious activities of Lord Krishna!



Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 8 chapters 15 to 22 describe Lord Vamanadeva and Bali Maharaja's astonishing pastime

Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple (or Thiru Ooragam)

At Kanchipuram



Lord Sri Ulagalantha Perumal at Kanchipuram

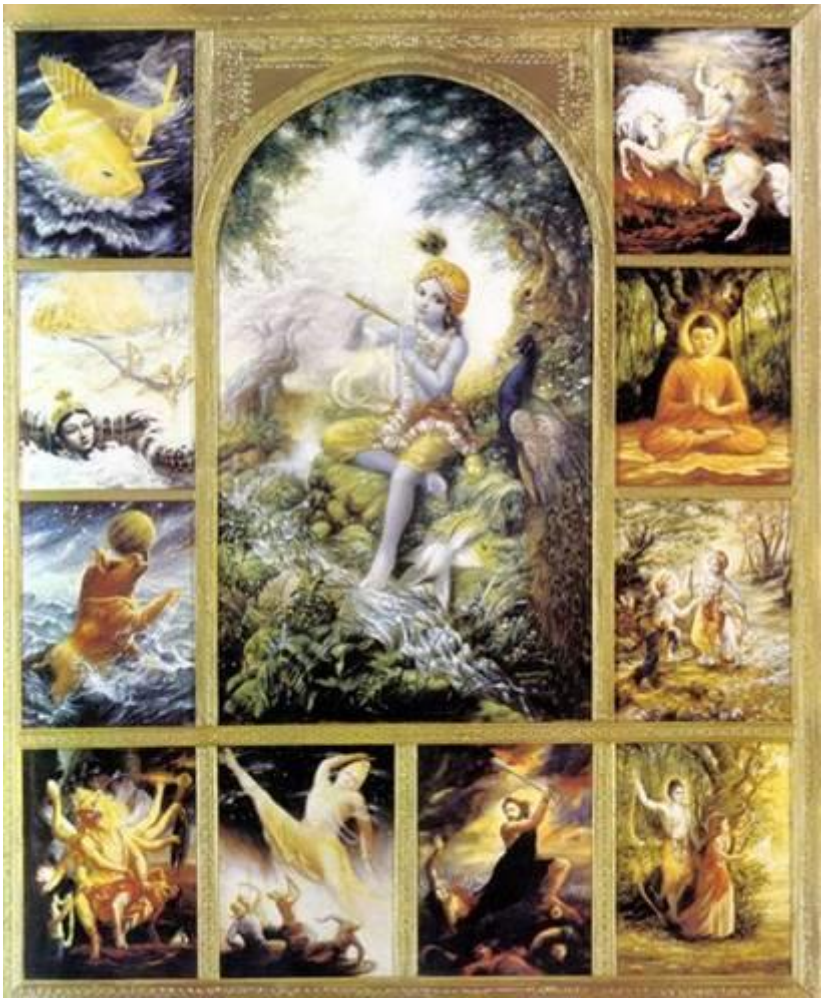
The famous, Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple is dedicated to Lord Vamanadeva's (Trivikrama) is located at Kanchipuram (74km from Chennai). The gigantic Ulagalantha Perumal is a unique deity and special to Kanchipuram, as Lord of this size, and in this form, cannot be seen in any other Divya Desams. Sri Ulagalantha Perumal is over 35 feet in height. Left leg is seen lifted at a right angle (to the body), parallel to the ground. Right leg is seen placed on Bali Maharaj's head. Two fingers on Lord's left hand stretched out referring to the two steps He took to measure this world. One stretched finger on His right hand indicates the question the Lord posed to Bali as to where He could place his third step.

As per the local legend, when Bali Maharaja gave his head in charity as the place for Lord Vamana's third step, Bali could no longer get the darshan of Lord. He prayed to the Lord for His darshan. Answering to Bali Maharaja's prayers, Lord Vamana appeared as Ulagalantha Perumal.

Inside the Sri Ulagalantha Temple there are four Divya Desams (108 Vaishnava temples mentioned in the works of the Alvars (saints) of Sri Sampadaya) namely, Thiru Karvaanam, Thiru Kaaragam, Thiru Ooragam and Thiru Neeragam.

Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple at Kanchipuram

Utsava deities at Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple



Lord Sri Krishna is the fountainhead of all incarnations, and He is therefore the cause of all causes.
Lord Krishna has ten primary incarnations. Starting from the upper left-hand corner, these are: 1) Matsya, 2) Kurma, 3) Varaha, 4) Nrsimhadeva, 5) Vamanadeva, 6) Parashurama, 7) Ramachandra, 8) Balarama, 9) Buddha, and 10) Kalki
[Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1 chapter 1 verse 17]

chalayasi vikramane balim adbhuta-vamana
pada-nakha-nira-janita-jana-pavana
kesava dhrta-vamana-rupa jaya jagadisa hare

O Kesava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a dwarf-brahmana! All glories to You! O wonderful dwarf, by Your massive steps You deceive King Bali, and by the Ganges water that has emanated from the nails of Your lotus feet, You deliver all living beings within this world. *[Sri Dasavatara-stotra, from Gita-Govinda by Srila Jayadeva Gosvami]*

Useful Resources:

Kanchipuram Yatra: http://www.dandavats.com/?p=33599

Lord Vamanadeva Pastimes - Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 8 chapters 15 to 22:

http://vedabase.com/sb/8/15

Holy Pilgrimages: www.Holy-Pilgrimages.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HolyPilgrimages
Holy Dham: www.HolyDham.com
Holy Places: http://vaisnava.cz/ind_en.html

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare |
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare ||